

Oral History Interview

with

RAYMOND HARE

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By Dennis O'Brien

For the John F. Kennedy Library

O'BRIEN: Well, I guess the obvious place to start is with the question: When did you first meet John Fitzgerald Kennedy?

HARE: I first met him right after he became President. Because I came back to the Department of State in '59, and I was Deputy Under Secretary at the end of the Eisenhower administration and the first of the Kennedy administration. So, I first met him then during that period after he came into office in 1961.

O'BRIEN: While you were involved in Near East affairs in the Eisenhower administration, did you take any note of his criticisms of Eisenhower-John F. Dulles policy after the Suez Canal crisis?

HARE: Of President Kennedy's?

O'BRIEN: Yes.

HARE: You see, at the time of the Suez crisis, at the very beginning of it, I was then Director General of the Foreign Service up until the latter part of '56, September, '56. At that time I went to Cairo. So as Director General, I had no political responsibilities. I did, as a matter of fact, have a certain amount of contact with Secretary Dulles during that period because ever so often--I suppose this was sort of a bootlegging operation, or moonlighting--Secretary Dulles would call me in to discuss Near Eastern things on an ad hoc basis. But it was sort of an in and out type of a relationship. I had no continuing contact on it at that time. So that was my knowledge of it at that time. After that, I went to Cairo and saw the scene from there. Now in specific

better again now due to the fertilizers, using a different strain which AID (Agency for International Development) has done. So actually there were some facilities put in, envisioned originally in export, which could be used for that purpose.

O'BRIEN: Did it disrupt the traditional patterns of agriculture in any way by bringing it in?

HARE: Oh no. This was only brought in to meet actual need, not to supplant. We tried not to do that. They didn't want it either. They wouldn't ask for any more than they needed. Although sometimes governments will try to build up a little surplus, just to prevent profiteering, if they build up a little reservoir of reserve of grain, or any product that they may need, it's a sort of a hedge against inflationary prices.

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HARE: If you don't allow for a steady inflow of young people, qualified young people who have trained, every year, you're going to be in trouble. The personnel balance got way out as a result of various things, promotion policies and other things. If you cut down over a period of time on your intake of young people, this gets known all over the country. These people, the professors who are interested in the future of their students, no longer encourage them to go into the Foreign Service. And whereas, of course, the Department may be getting far more than you can take, it may need these forces later on. But going back to what you were talking about before. . . .

O'BRIEN: Well, all right, I think it's probably a logical time to go on to talk about the Jupiter and the missile crisis and I guess the Jupiter is the place to begin. Why did they put them in Turkey in the first place during the Eisenhower administration?

HARE: Well, there was a considerable feeling--this was before my period out there--that the installation of Jupiters in Europe was a very important defensive step. There were only two countries, as far as I can recall, that were convinced of the utility of the Jupiters; they were Italy and Turkey. When I got there, there had been agreement on this program and the crews were over here from Turkey and the installations were in the process of being installed, planning was going on. We were in the installation period.

Now what had happened was that apparently the new administration, when it came in--and I suppose this is quite confidential because I'm not quite sure of the extent to which it's fully known--had reached a different determination about the Jupiters. When Secretary Rusk came out in April of '61, just after I arrived--because there was a meeting of CEN~~TO~~ /Central Treaty Organization/ there at that time--I had the job of being host to the secretary and his group. I must say he's a very pleasant person to be a host to and a very easy person to be a host to, otherwise it might have been very difficult. My wife had not arrived at that time. He came to the CEN~~TO~~ meeting and in the discussions with Foreign Minister Sarper--I was there at the time--he indicated that we had had reservations about the Jupiters and would be inclined to stop the program. But the Turks did not want to do so. Perhaps we had convinced them too well, or at least very well, by that time . . .

O'BRIEN: Now this is 1961?

HARE: This is 1961, April.

O'BRIEN: In April.

HARE: April, 1961. This is a background that people don't know because they think that these things happened later. I was there and this was done and I can tell you. But Sarper and the Turkish government were not inclined to call off this thing. So we proceeded with the program.

Now apparently, later on--and this followed the Cuban crisis and was oftentimes associated with the Cuban crisis, and I'm told, I haven't read it, that Robert Kennedy indicated that it was rather directly related to the Cuban crisis. You'll know better than I because you've gone into it. I just haven't checked this out, but I've seen a reference to it--the assumption was that our insistence on withdrawing the Jupiters came by some sort of a deal with the Soviets. What I believe happened, however, was that this came up in the course of a general review of the situation at the time of the Cuban crisis. I can't tell you this was true, this would be subject to verification--Secretary Rusk would know if you talk to him about it, he'd be the one person that could be certain about this--that President Kennedy had rather assumed, he knew about whether the previous approach had been made, he didn't realize that it had not been implemented, I'm told. And when, in this review it was found out that it had not been done, he felt the time had then come to do it.

Therefore, there was in the earlier part of the next year, that is '63, there was an intensive effort made to call off the program. This was done basically with the idea of exchanging land missiles for submarine missiles as being a better thing. Now the Turks were very diffident about doing this because some people may be very timorous about being lightning rods for the Soviets, but the Turks aren't that type. They weren't at all intimidated about this, and they really weren't too keen about it. They didn't have any qualms about it but eventually they agreed to it. It was along toward the midpart of the year when it was finally completed.

O'BRIEN: Well, going back to that Rusk visit in 1961, was that the principle reason for his coming out to Turkey at that time?

HARE: Oh no, no. He came out for the CENTO conference; he attended all CENTO conferences.

O'BRIEN: Yeah. Okay, now after CENTO was there anything else he took up at that time with the Turkish government?

HARE: Not that I recall at the moment, no.

O'BRIEN: He just raised at that point, he just raised the question of stopping the development of . . .

HARE: That's correct, that's correct.

O'BRIEN: And then ran into resistance. Okay, how about from that point on and your instructions from the department in Washington.

HARE: Well, we were making headway on a different program, you see.

O'BRIEN: Yes. And all during this time, the department did not issue any instructions to approach the Turkish government?

HARE: No, not that I recall. Of course, we were moving ahead with the program. The training was going on, construction was going on.

O'BRIEN: And you were recommending the continuation of the program.

HARE: No, I wasn't recommending it, it was just going.

O'BRIEN: It was just going?

HARE: The question of its discontinuance hadn't come up and it hadn't taken that form and it just kept going. It was just a natural force. There's one more thing here and that pretty much concludes the Jupiter thing but I think it's significant. Perhaps it's the most significant thing that I've had to say this morning, and that is, that I came back to Washington at one period, I can't remember here, that is in '63 . . .

O'BRIEN: Fine.

HARE: . . . and I went to see the President alone. And as we were going to the door, he said, "You can tell anyone in the Turkish government, if there's any question, that this question of the Jupiters," that's what I came to talk to him about, "is not part of any deal with the Russians, is not the result of any deal with the Russians," and he authorized me to say that as coming from him to the Turkish government.

O'BRIEN: Okay, now let's go to the Cuban missile crisis just for a moment. When were you first informed of the Cuban situation?

HARE: That was a very unhappy story. I was down on a beautiful beach in southern Turkey, presumably out of touch with the office. But one of these awful telephones did find me, and it was my Deputy Chief of Mission in Ankara saying this had happened and he thought I'd probably want to get back and I said I thought so too. So I got back into clothes again and headed for Ankara. But that's how that was. It broke up a lovely vacation.

O'BRIEN: When did that come? Did that come prior to President Kennedy's public announcement? You don't happen to recall the time schedule?

HARE: I'm not quite sure, well, just as the story broke. It was a crisis, obviously. In a crisis, you get the hell going back to home base and that's what I did. I wasn't instructed to, I just did. And then, of course, you had instructions to explain this thing, and all that sort of thing.

O'BRIEN: And then you made contacts with the Turkish government, explaining the situation?

HARE: Oh, yes, sure.

O'BRIEN: What were their reactions? Did they immediately

sense that they might be in some imminent danger of attack by the Soviet Union?

HARE: You know, that's not in the Turkish temperament. Even if they did, they would take it for granted. They're very strange in that way, perhaps, but danger does not bother them. They take danger as being part of life and in consequence oftentimes they're much happier, I guess.

O'BRIEN: Well, in your own embassy as far as preparations for the possibility of war or an attack on Turkey, did your MAAG [Military Assistance Advisory Group] groups or did the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], for example, take any unusual precautions or make any moves that you recall?

HARE: I would be greatly surprised if we didn't but I don't know what we did, to be frank with you. I mean you do certain things in times of crisis that are so visceral that it's hard to sort them out sometimes.

O'BRIEN: Did you sense anything on the part of the Russians, any unusual activity on the part of the Russians during that?

HARE: No.

O'BRIEN: Did the Turkish government at any time ever try to get the United States to back off the Cuban situation, or . . .

HARE: Not that I recall and I'd be very surprised because I think I would remember that.

O'BRIEN: Did you get any reactions on the blockade idea, the blockade at all?

HARE: Not that I recall.

O'BRIEN: Well, I think that's interesting about Rusk approaching them in 1961. I'd never heard that. I think it's highly important.

HARE: It is important, it is important. So you see, the decision had been reached regarding the Jupiters a long time before the Cuban thing. The only thing is, it hadn't been run through.

O'BRIEN: Did you have any direct contacts during any of this time, or particularly during the Cuban missile crisis, with the White House, or people in the White House?

HARE: Not that I recall during the Cuban thing, no.

O'BRIEN: Did discussions over uses at that point of Turkish air force bases for reconnaissance things, did that ever come up while you were there?

HARE: Not that I recall, not that I recall.

O'BRIEN: How about questions like, on recognition of the UAR [United Arab Republic], as I understand Turkey . . .

HARE: Well, I'll tell you. What usually happened. . . . These CENFEO conferences come at a certain time, they're not of the Secretary's choosing, obviously. So what he does in these conferences--did rather, and he did superbly well--is he would take the group to a considerable extent in his confidence, and he was an expert at presenting what concerned us and why. Then he would meet privately with the various ministers also and discuss. . . . You took the advantage to sort of cover the waterfront to a considerable extent. As a consequence these conferences weren't limited to the thing of the moment on which he'd give the greatest stress. Now I just happened to recall what happened in '61.

O'BRIEN: Yes.

HARE: The other things were sort of. . . . The Vietnam thing, I know, I can recall in Tehran went very clearly, a very excellent presentation indeed developed there. But that was because that was top priority at that time.

O'BRIEN: Well, in regard to Turkish, U. S., and NATO relations in those years, did you sense any loosening of ties to NATO as a result of the test ban treaty?

HARE: No, actually aside from these erosion phenomena that we were talking about earlier--that you did see, you could foresee rather, and perhaps see some initial sign--the real problem came at the time of the Cyprus affair. That was the real crunch. That arose essentially out of that part of the so-called famous Johnson letter, at that time, which indicated that if due to precipitate action Turkey would become involved in hostilities, with which we had nothing to do--which we weren't consulted--that we wouldn't necessarily think that that brought NATO into the picture, because that wasn't the score. It was that part of it that the Turks took particularly hard. And frankly, it was a good thing finally when they published it because even though the language was tough it wasn't as bad as people had thought about it. So long as you don't have the actual form of the thing, your